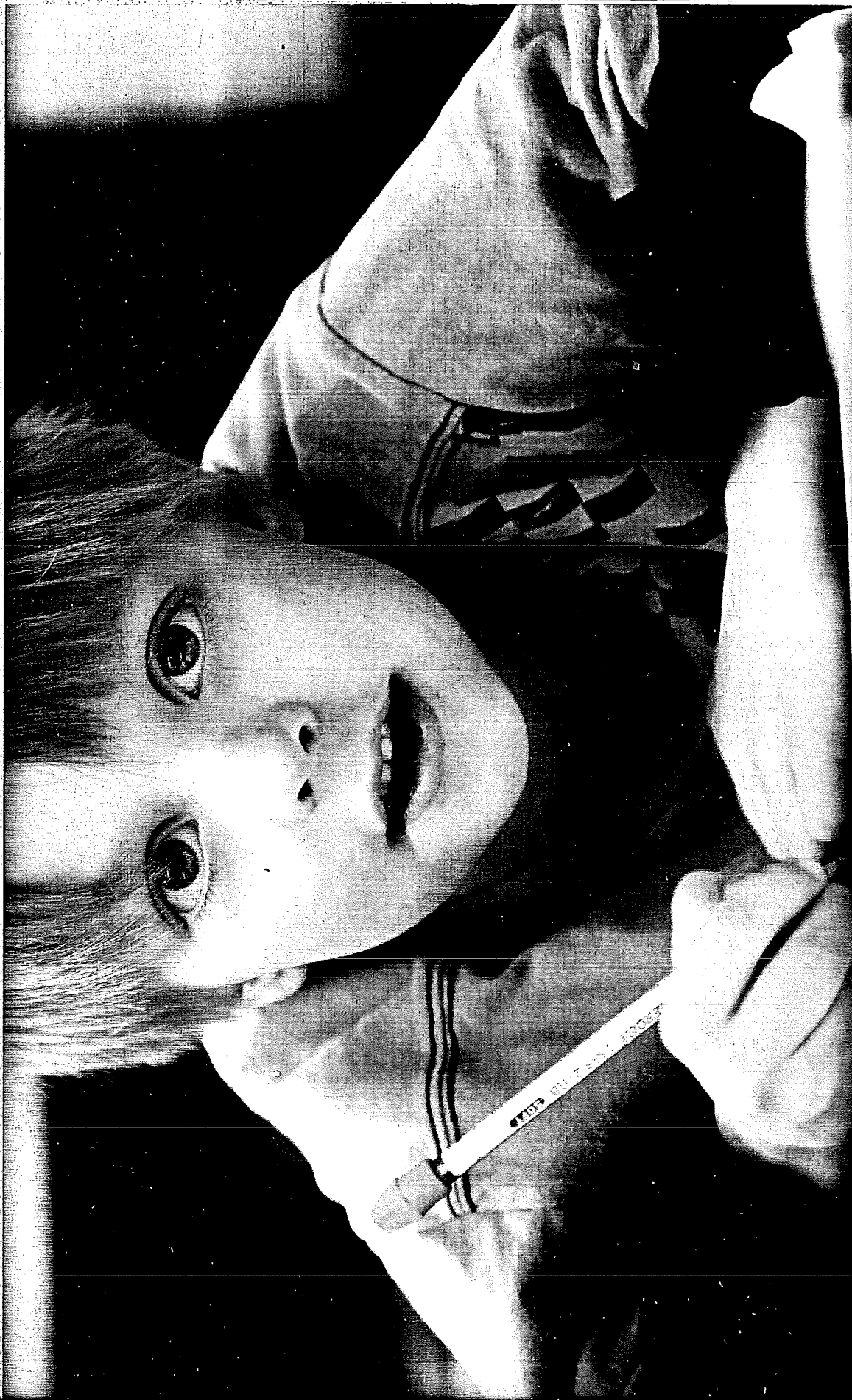


# Launching the Writing Workshop

by  
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# Overview for Kindergarten Unit 1, Launching the Writing Workshop

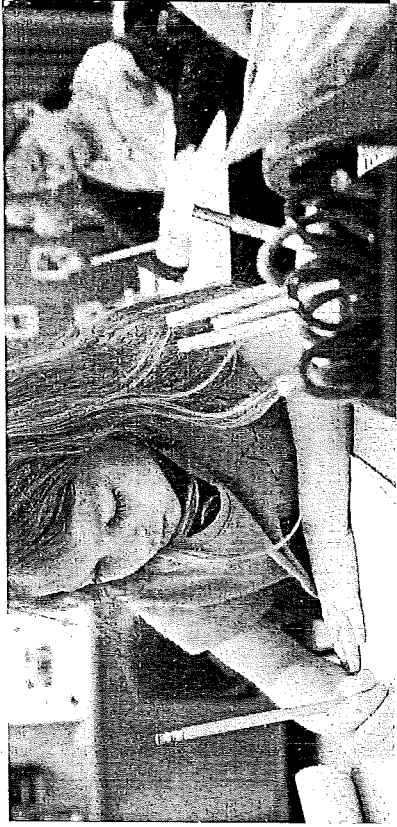
Session/Minilesson			Conferring and Small-Group Work		Mid-Workshop Teaching		Share
Bend I: We Are All Writers							
1	We Are All Writers: Putting Ideas on Paper with Pictures and Words	Anticipating the Challenges of These First Days	Writers Work on Their Writing	Writers Write More Than One Piece in a Day	Becoming a Club of Writers		
2	Writers Know that "When We Are Done, We Have Just Begun."	Helping Students Get Ideas onto Paper			Learning Systems and Tools for the Writing Workshop: Table Monitors and Anchor Charts		
3	Carrying on Independently as Writers	Problem Solving Management Concerns		The Sound of a Productive Writing Workshop	More Tools for the Writing Workshop: Writing Folders and Date Stamps		
4	Writers Call to Mind What They Want to Say, Then Put That onto the Page	Study Your Students' Writing to Gain Insights for Future Teaching		Learning an Attention-Getting Ritual and Adding More	Showing Action in Pictures		
5	Stretching Out Words to Write Them	Supporting Students in Getting Words on Their Papers		Reading Our Writing to Our Friends	Adding Labels to Pictures		
6	Writing Even Hard-to-Write Ideas	Empowering Early Writers		Using the "When We Are Done, We Have Just Begun" Chart	Sharing Strategies		
Bend II: Writing Teaching Books							
7	Turning Pieces into Scrolls and Books	Encouraging Children to Add to Their Work While Nurturing Confidence and Building Enthusiasm	Making Cover Pages with Titles		Making Sure All the Pages in Your Book Go Together		
8	Planning Teaching Books Page by Page	Coaching Students to Return to Unfinished Work	Using a Newly Established Writing Partner Meeting Area		Going Back to Old Pieces and Writing More		
9	Asking and Answering Questions to Add More	Reflecting on Your Role in the Writing Conference	Being Our Own Writing Partner: Self-Assessing		Interviewing Writers about Their Process		
10	Stretching Out Words to Write Even More Sounds	Helping Writers of Varying Abilities to Put Words on Their Paper	Stretching Out Words to Hear Beginning and Ending Sounds		Using High-Frequency Words When Writing		
11	Letter to Teachers: Making Writing the Best It Can Be						
Bend III: Writing Stories							
12	Getting Ideas for Stories and Practicing Storytelling	Helping Writers Tell Their Stories	Going Back to Reread and Add More Details		Admiring the Work of Writers in the Classroom		
13	Planning Stories Page by Page: Planning and Telling Stories across Pages	Helping Students Stretch Their Stories across Multiple Pages	Noticing and Separating Pages that Don't Work Together		Planning Pages across Our Fingers		
14	Adding More Details to Pictures and Stories	Reminding Children that Writers Make Time to Write Words	Drawing and Writing to Show Action		Writing Partners Can Be Writing Teachers		
15	Letter to Teachers: Stretching and Writing Words	Hearing and Recording Sounds in Sequence					
16	Bringing Our Writing to Life: Adding Dialogue with Speech Bubbles	Coaching English Language Learners			How to Write a True Story		
17	Using Everything to Make Pieces the Best They Can Be	Nudging Students Toward Next Steps	Partners as Writing Teachers		Selecting Pieces for Publication		
Bend IV: Preparing for Publication							
18	Editing	Supporting Students as Editors					
19	Letter to Teachers: Reading into the Circle: An Author's Celebration	Fancying Up Writing for an Audience			Reflecting on Growth		

# Carrying on Independently as Writers

**I**T IS HARD TO OVEREMPHASIZE the importance of establishing clear structures and routines so children can carry on with independence during writing time. You need to imagine kids starting, working on, and completing their writing as best they are able, moving from one text to another with verve and confidence, even though the work they produce will probably not dazzle you at this early point in the year. Chances are good that many of your children's "finished pieces" will consist of an underdeveloped scrawl and little more. And, that's okay—for now.

For children to carry on with independence, you'll want to think about the routines that you need to teach explicitly. Certainly, kids will need to learn the expectations you have of them, such as when to give you their attention (many teachers use a catchy refrain like "One, two, three, all eyes on me!") and how to move around the room quickly and quietly. Children will need to know how to find any supplies they'll need—pens, pencils, different kinds of paper, the date stamp—so that they can easily and seamlessly keep themselves going during writing workshop. Most of all, they need to know what's expected of them during different parts of the workshop. You will want to teach children to move to and from the meeting area quickly and sit on their bottoms, hands to themselves, on assigned rug spots. Then, too, you will need to teach children what they are expected to do when, in the middle of a minilesson, you say, "Turn and talk" and then, a minute or two later, "Eyes back here."

You will no doubt come up with other systems for kids to carry on with independence, and you may even recruit your kids to think of their own ways to keep themselves going. It's never too early to convey to kids that they are their own best resource during a workshop. One way or another, students need to know where to find the day's schedule, the supplies they need, and their spot at the table and on the rug. As they gain independence, encourage children to be problem solvers. When a child acts with notable self-reliance, you may want to celebrate this: "Writers, will you look here for a minute? I want to tell you about



**IN THIS SESSION,** you'll teach students that writers come up with solutions to their problems and carry on writing.



## GETTING READY

- ✓ Your own writing from Session 2 (see Teaching)
- ✓ Paper, to start a new piece of your own writing (see Teaching)
- ✓ Date stamps (see Share)
- ✓ Two-pocket folders for each student, with a red dot sticker on one pocket and a green dot sticker on the other pocket (see Share)
- ✓ "When We Are Done, We Have Just Begun" chart from Session 2

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.K.2, W.K.5, RFS.K.1, RFS.K.2, RFS.K.3, SL.K.1, L.K.1, L.K.2



the smart work Pedro did. Pedro finished his writing. But do you think he just sat there and said, "Oh, no, what will I do now? Oh, no, oh, no." No way! Pedro solved his own problem. And you know what he did?"

*"It's never too early to convey to kids that they are their own best resource during a workshop."*

When children are able to carry on with independence, writing as best they can, you will be able to move among them, teaching into their work. That is, you are only free to teach if kids are not relying on you for every little thing. Only then can you pull a group of children in to huddle and show them how to write *lion*, stretching the first sound out, /llll/, and then thinking what letter makes that sound—/l!—and popping that letter onto the page. That instruction will be important, and it will be important, too, to show children that writers reread their writing by putting a finger under each object they've drawn, saying aloud what that object is, and then asking themselves, "Did I put everything here that needs to go? Did I leave off my dog's tail? Oh no!" But you can't do that teaching until you explicitly teach your children to be resourceful, brave, independent writers. This means that your first goal—helping writers work with confidence and independence, at whatever level of work they can pull off—actually enables the next goal, which is for you to teach in ways that dramatically lift the level of what kids can do. Today will go a long way toward accomplishing that instruction.





## MINILESSON

# Carrying on Independently as Writers

## CONNECTION

**Playact that you are stuck and dependent, bothering everyone with requests for direction, setting the stage for you to emphasize the need for resourcefulness.**

Once children were convened on the rug, I slouched in my chair and let out a big sigh. "I don't know what to do today. I already wrote my garden page, and I don't know what to add. No one told me what to do." I sighed dramatically again and made a desperate face.

Then I tapped one child, sitting nearby, on the shoulder and whined, "Yatri, what do I do today? Tell me, tell me." Yatri shrugged and giggled.

"Come on, everyone, help me out here." I tugged on Draco's shirt. "Draaaaaaaaco, you'll help me, won't you?" I whined. "Tell me, what should I do?"

The kids burst out laughing as Draco frantically tried to tuck his shirt in.

Shifting out of the role playing, I sat up straight in my chair and asked, "Is that what I do, writers, when I am not sure what to do?"

The children all chorused, "Nooooooo." I nodded and firmly agreed with them. "No way!"

## Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that when writers have problems and don't know what to do, they say, 'I can solve this myself.' Then writers come up with solutions to those problems and carry on, writing, writing, writing. That way, writers don't waste precious time!"

## COACHING

*The connection phase of the minilesson is a time to catch children's attention, have a little fun, and help them see how their learning connects to other learning and their lives in general. If this connection doesn't feel right to you, try something else. You might tell children a quick (very quick) story about a time when you thought you needed help, but realized you could figure it all out on your own. Or, pose a common problem kids have been having with their writing and ask the class, "How could we each help ourselves through this?"*

## TEACHING

**Demonstrate that you solve your own problems and figure out what to do during writing time.**

"Let me show you what I mean." Resuming the role of the desperate and stuck writer, I said, "I finished my writing about the garden and I don't know what to do next. Who will help me decide? Will my mother tell me what to do? Should I call her up?" I got out my cell phone, acting out that possibility.

The kids shook their heads.

"Will the principal tell me what to do?" I started to get up to go to the office.

Again, the kids shook their heads.

Nodding, and sitting tall, I confirmed, "You are right. I am the writer, so I need to decide. It is like I am the boss of my own writing." Pulling out my page of writing, I looked it over with new sense of self-direction. "I'm the boss of this, so I get to say if it is done or not. Hmm, . . . I am looking to see if, one, I have a lot of information here about the garden, and I do. Two, I am looking to see if I filled up the page, and I did. Three, I am looking to see if my name is here, and it is. Four, I am looking to see if I got words on my page, and I see not that many. Only two.

"So, now I know what I am going to do. I am going to write more words, and then start a new page. The words are easy. I'll just say the words and write the sound I hear—but the new page?"

Resuming the role play of a needy writer, I beseeched a child, "Help me, Yatri. What do I write about? Help me, help me. Oh no, oh no . . ."

Yatri laughed and, with the class joining in, told me, "You gotta do it yourself!"

"You are right," I said, sitting tall. "And I can think of what I know about. Hmm, . . . What do my friends and I talk about. I know! I know about cooking nice food and having people come over to my house." I took out a new page out of the writing tray (one that usually sits at each one of the tables) and quickly put my name on the top. At that point, I stopped.

**Debrief, emphasizing the way your realization that you can solve your problems pertains to other days and other children.**

"Did you see what I did? When I was done with my garden piece and wasn't sure what to do, I didn't go line up beside the teacher for help. I didn't call my mother. Instead, I realized that I am the boss of my own writing, and I solved my own problem. I read over my writing, checking to see if it was done, and I realized I still gotta add more words. I'll do that soon. I also realized then that I should write another page. You, too, can be the boss of your writing and make your own decisions about what to do next. Remember, if you're not sure what to do, you can read over our 'When We Are Done, We Have Just Begun' chart. That can help give you ideas for what to do, too!"

*When you shift from the demonstration to debriefing, students should feel the different moves you are making just by the way your introduction and posture change. After most demonstrations, there will be a time for you to debrief, and that's a time when you are no longer acting like a writer. You are the teacher who has been watching the demonstration and now turns to talk, eye to eye with kids, asking if they noticed this or that during the previous portion of the minilesson.*

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Quickly recap a couple of the "problems" you told children you were having earlier and recruit their help solving these.**

"I was just playing around earlier when I pleaded for poor Yatri and Draco to help me. But let's pretend that I really am having those problems. Let's say that I'm ready to write a new book, but there's no more paper in my tray. Do I just stop writing? Do I just give up for the day? Do I line up behind the teacher and whine, 'Help me! Help me!' Or are there ways I might solve these problems? Turn and tell the person sitting next to you what I should do if there is no more paper in the tray.

"So, writers, I heard some of you say that I could go to another table that has paper in their tray! What problem solvers!

"What if my pen runs out of ink? Turn and talk quickly. What should I do?

"A lot of you said that I could get a new pen. Of course! There are lots of pens on the table, and if there aren't any left, I could always find one in the writing center. What a great solution!

"Last one, okay? What if I wrote piece and I don't like it and want to start a new one. What should I do? Just stop and not write anymore? Turn and talk, fast!

"All of you realized that there's tons of paper in the paper tray for me to use, so I *don't* need to give up on writing. I can just grab more paper and think about a new topic to write about. I can think about something else I know about and write about that!"

**Debrief, reminding children that they are writers who come up with their own solutions for problems.**

"Well, it's clear that you are *SuperWriters* who can solve your own problems."

## LINK

**Channel students to expect that they'll encounter times when they don't know what to do. Remind them that when those times come, they have ways to "save the day."**

"Writers, I have bad news. There will be problems today. Some of you will get stuck. You will sit there and think, 'I don't know what to do.'

"But I also have good news. The good news is that you are *Super Writers*, and you can 'save the day' and solve your own problems. I can't wait to see how you, the *Super Writers*, do that."





## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Problem Solving Management Concerns

**B**EFORE TODAY'S WORKSHOP, you can take a moment to anticipate the predictable challenges that you'll be addressing in your conferences and small-group instruction. Usually, the easiest way to think about this is to cluster students according to some of the most pressing issues and then to think about your goals for students who are facing those challenges.

You will inevitably have students who are so enthusiastic to begin writing that they forget, time and again, to write their name on their work. Pull this group together and say, "Last night I was admiring your work. I found this beautiful writing," showing a child's draft. "But then I thought, 'Who is the author?' Then I looked at the next piece of writing and I said, 'Wait! Who is the author of this one?' Soon I had a huge problem because I couldn't tell who the author was on almost any piece! Can you talk to your partner and see if we can invent a solution?" Chances are good that a child will suggest that writers add their names to their writing. A closer inspection will show that, in fact, published authors do just that!

You may also have a number of students who have taken you at your word when you encouraged them to write a second piece of writing. These youngsters will have been flying through a ream of paper, making a hasty scrawl on each page and then pronouncing it done. It may seem that writing their name and stamping the date has taken longer than any other part of writing. You may hold yourself in check, pleasantly asking these writers, "What are you making?" or "Can you read it to me?" Both of which are great responses because you are conveying your expectations. The youngster may not get the hint, however, and may earnestly point out that he is making new pieces. He may even count off the number of "completed" pieces. You will need to intervene. Don't rely on questions in an instance such as this. There is a place for clearly telling writers things they need to know. Tell these writers that the goal is to fill a page with information, making pages that will actually teach people a ton of stuff.

There will be students who are the opposite—who belabor the same piece for several days, adding additional layers to their text so that it almost looks as if one needs to do

an archaeological dig to bring out all the meanings. You'll need to tell students that the goal is to make their writing into something that people can read and learn from. That means it is important to stop and move to another piece of paper once their page is full.

Another issue you may encounter in the early days of your writing workshop is students struggling when it comes to sharing community supplies. Not only are your students new to writing workshop, but many of them may be new to a structured school day or being part of a larger community of peers. It is not uncommon to hear children arguing over who gets to use the date stamp first or which one gets the purple marker. On the following page, you'll see how I go about helping two students.

## MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

### The Sound of a Productive Writing Workshop

"Writers, Nicky just told me he couldn't think because of the noise, and Sebastian said *he* couldn't concentrate. That's a problem because all of you are writing really important information pieces, and you all need to be able to do your best work. I asked Sebastian and Nicky how they thought they might solve this big problem, and they had a great suggestion. Let's listen to them."

Nicky and Sebastian stood, chests puffed forward, and Nicky announced, dramatically, "We gotta all *whisper*."

I gave them a thumbs up and asked the class, "Are you willing to try? Are you willing to use two-inch voices?" To demonstrate, I whispered, "Like this?"

After a few minutes of children talking softly while they worked and me reminding the outliers, I said, "Writers, listen to how the room sounds. This is the sound of a good writing workshop. Now everyone can concentrate and do their best work."



### As Students Continue Working . . .

"I see Fabian look at the chart and then start a new piece. He's writing his name already!"

"Super Writers, Yatri couldn't remember how to write *me*, but she looked up at the writing I have in the front of the room and it helped her write the word! She had a problem and solved it!"

"Owen couldn't remember what he wrote, but he didn't just sit there and say, 'Help me, help me.' No way! Owen touched everything in the picture, and that helped him remember what he put on his page."

"Margay couldn't think of what to write about next, so she looked around the room and decided to teach people about our library of books! She invented a brand-new strategy for coming up with ideas—looking around the room! Way to go, Super Writers! Keep your writing pens moving!"

As I was finishing up a conference with another student, I noticed an uproar at the red table and made that my next stop. Jordan and Ryan were halfway out of their chairs—each with a fist holding a blue marker and each doing his best to wrestle it away from the other. Most of the table's marker supply was spread out on the table in front of their seats.

"I don't see writers working here!" I exclaimed. "Where are the writers, Jordan and Ryan?" I knelt between them, breaking their eye contact. "Writers," I said seriously, "*do not* wrestle over markers. Can you imagine Mem Fox and Tomie DiPaola wrestling over markers?"

"Boys, look at me." They turned. Jordan's eyes were wet and he was breathing hard, little fists clenched. Ryan looked determinedly at the floor. "Writers, I want you each to tell me what is happening here to keep you from your important writing work. Jordan, you first."

"He keeps on taking all the markers, and I need blue! He took all the blues!"

"No!" Ryan interrupted. "He's the one taking them! He wouldn't give me any before, so I just took them!"

I knew that I needed to step in and redirect these writers. I had to teach them about the expectations of a writing workshop. In this case, I needed to help them understand that writing time is for writing, and that a writing community shares supplies.

"Aha. Well, you *know* that I expect writers to be writing during writing workshop, not wrestling. I see that you're having trouble with the markers. I have a suggestion. When we keep the markers in the tub and just take out one when we need it, then *everybody* gets to use the markers. Every writer needs them to be able to add color and details to their pieces! So do that now. Put all the markers back in the tub. Remember, we always keep the markers in the tub and take out just the one we are using. The tub is always right here in the middle of the table so everyone can reach it." Reluctantly the boys plopped their hoarded markers back into the tub.

I then needed to help the boys move on. In this case, I needed to help them sit in spots where they could do their best work. "If it is not working for you two to be near each other today, find a smart spot away from each other. Writers sometimes need to move around a little bit to find a spot where they can do their best work. Where would you like to be today, Ryan, where you can do your very best work as a writer?" I asked this in a way as to signify that there was no other option but to move.

"I want to be on the rug with a clipboard," Ryan replied.

"Good choice. Go get yourself one, and I'll meet you over there in a few minutes to talk about your writing work! Jordan, will you be able to keep working at the table?" He nodded yes.

At this point I wanted to name what the children had done as writers and remind them to do this often in future writing. "So, boys, you're doing a good job remembering that our writing community shares supplies and that we help each other find smart places to do our best work. You can keep these things in your heads every day so that you won't have marker trouble during writing workshop. And guess what? It's exactly the same for the other supplies. We share them."



SHARE

## More Tools for the Writing Workshop

*Writing Folders and Date Stamps*

**Engage children in helping you solve the problem of where to store ongoing and finished writing, setting up folders and the ritual of storing work in them.**

"Writers, I want to congratulate you for carrying on so well all on your own. This room has the buzz of a productive workshop! Many of you started another piece today! Some of you have even started a third or a fourth or a fifth piece. This class is writing up a storm! But now we have a new problem. Where are we going to put all these pieces that we have made? I was talking with a few of you, and we came up with an idea. How about if you each have your own writing folder, like professional authors have? Your folder can be a little home for your writing." I distributed a folder to each child.

"Can I tell you about a little system that some kids in another school came up with to help organize their writing? These kindergartners decided they should put their finished work on this side (the left pocket) and the work they were still working on over here (the right pocket). To remember which pieces of writing were stopped, or done, they put a red stoplight (a red sticker) on the one side, and for pieces they still wanted to work on, they put a green 'go' light (a green sticker) on the other. The cool thing is that two five-year-olds came up with that system, and now thousands of kids all across the world are using that same system! You want to try it too?" The children decided yes, so I called on the table monitors to distribute large red and green dots.

**Introduce date stamps and teach writers to date their work today and every day.**

"Writers, before you slide your work carefully into a pocket, making sure it doesn't bunch up, I have one more system for you. I've put a date stamp on each of your tables. Please stamp today's date (it will always be set to the day's date) on each piece as you put it away, and after this, put this stamp on whatever you are working on every day."

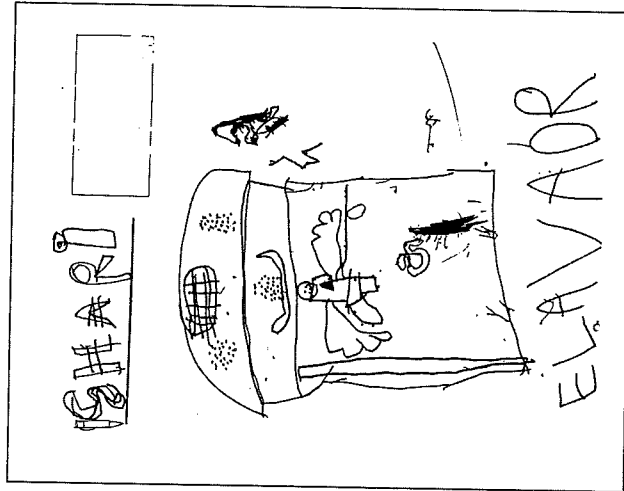


FIG. 3-1 Shari's writing: Elevator

*The idea of introducing new tools, such as the date stamp, can send some of us down the rabbit hole of imagining all the ways children will misuse them. I can see some of you right now envisioning your young writers stamping away with joyful abandon—their papers, their friends' papers, their friends' faces, their arms, the furniture. Try to smile it away as natural exploration. And then set the boundary: date stamps are for stamping our work just once. It will be much easier for children to treat their tools as tools if they've had a chance to play a little.*